



State Representative Justin Pizzulli

Sponsor Testimony – House Bill 606

House Finance Committee

June 18th, 2024

Good afternoon! Chair Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on HB606, the Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act, or the CAMPUS Act.

It's an honor to be here, and we are grateful to share more about this bipartisan effort. It brings me hope to see an Italian American Christian from Appalachia and an African American Christian from Columbus stand united against antisemitism and all forms of hate. Last summer, Representative Jarrells and I had the privilege of visiting Israel together. During our trip, we reflected on the phrase "never again," meaning to ensure that tragedies like the Holocaust are never repeated. This is an urgent bill for our current campus climate because "never again" means to take action now. Isaiah 62:1 says, "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent...."

A recent Hillel and ADL study reported 1,597 antisemitic incidents on college campuses nationwide since October 7th; a 700% increase.

After listening to over 50 university students across Ohio, the CAMPUS Act provides universities with essential tools and resources to enhance student safety and create inclusive environments. Key components include:

1. Policies and Procedures

We urge higher education institutions to adopt policies to combat racial, religious, and ethnic harassment, and intimidation, including comprehensive staff training.

2. Transparency

Promoting transparency in university policies regarding time, place, and manner restrictions on conduct is essential. This ensures that students are fully aware of such policies, preventing misunderstandings and protecting their free speech rights.

3. Reporting and Guidance

Standardized procedures for reporting and investigating incidents are critical. Students need assurance that their complaints are taken seriously and addressed promptly, with fair due process for all involved.

4. Data Reporting

Requiring universities to report hate incident metrics to the state will provide valuable data for understanding and addressing these issues. This information is crucial for the Chancellor and other stakeholders.

5. Security for Student Clubs and Organizations

Reliable security for student events is a must. Our bill introduces a one-time campus security and student safety grant program to ensure no student or organization has to fear for their safety.

6. Campus Grant Programs

We propose a one-time grants for campus communities. This initiative aims to foster understanding and peace by bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together through campus security, safety, and community grant programs.

In sum, supporting the CAMPUS Act is essential for fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful educational environment. It mandates comprehensive policies and training to combat harassment, ensuring proactive steps are taken to protect all students. By establishing anti-hate task forces, enhancing security measures, and creating a uniform reporting system, the bill addresses the urgent need for accountability and safety on campuses. The provision of state funding for security and intergroup outreach programs demonstrates a commitment to both immediate protection and long-term cultural unity. Enacting this bill not only safeguards students but also promotes a campus culture grounded in respect and understanding, essential for the academic and personal growth of every student.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Representative Jarrells, the Jewish Caucus, Alex Penrod of the Ohio Department of Higher Education, Nick Derksen of the Inter-University Council of Ohio, Emily Tully of the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Ohio, Howie Beigelman of Ohio Jewish Communities, Nick Rhodes from our policy team, my legislative aide Grace, and Chairman Edwards for their time, and invaluable feedback.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony.